

one-fifteenth of our defense budget. But I regret to say that since 1985 these programs have been cut significantly. This year the House and Senate have passed spending bills that would cut our request for international affairs by more than \$2 billion. In other words, we're cutting the very programs designed to keep our soldiers out of war in the first place.

Underfunding our arsenal of peace is as risky as underfunding our arsenal for war. For if we continue to underfund diplomacy, we will end up overusing our military. Problems we might have been able to resolve peacefully will turn into crises that we can only resolve at a cost of life and treasure. If this trend continues, there will be real consequences for important American interests.

Let me mention just a few, beginning with our interest in peace and stability across the Atlantic. Today, after the victory in Kosovo and in Bosnia, we have an opportunity to invest in peace so that future wars do not occur there. The people of the Balkans have been crippled by conflict, really, since the end of the cold war. Today, we have a chance to integrate them with each other and into the mainstream of Europe, where they will have strong incentives to maintain democracy and good behavior and avoid conflicts.

To do this, we don't need anything as ambitious as the Marshall plan. And whatever is done, we must insist that our European partners carry most of the load and that Balkan leaders themselves take responsibility for changing their policies. Still, the United States should be a part of this process. If we don't and the effort fails, make no mistake, there will be another bloody war that starts in the Balkans and spreads throughout southeastern Europe. And some day, more young Americans may be asked to risk their lives at far greater cost than our part of the rebuilding of the region.

If we are to succeed in winning the peace, we may see a 21st century—I'll say again—in which we do not have to send the young people of America to fight in another European war. That is a worthy objective. We have seen enough wars in Europe, claiming the lives of their children and America's young people. Now we have a chance to avoid it, and we ought to take the chance.

We also have a responsibility to protect American people from the dangers most likely to surface in the 21st century. The gravest of those may not be another country launching a nuclear weapon but that weapons of mass destruction will fall into the hands of terrorists and their rogue-state sponsors. We have worked to reduce that doomsday scenario. Since 1992, our support has helped to deactivate almost 5,000 nuclear warheads in the former Soviet Union; to eliminate nuclear weapons from three former Soviet republics; to strengthen the security of weapons and materials at over 100 sites; to tighten export controls in Russia and to purchase hundreds of tons, literally hundreds of tons, of highly enriched uranium that otherwise could be used for nuclear weapons that end up in the wrong hands.

This effort has received strong bipartisan support in the Congress for which I am very grateful. Today, the Russian economy is struggling, as we all know. The average salary of a highly trained weapons scientist in Russia—listen to this—the average salary of a highly trained weapons scientist in Russia is less than \$100 a month.

Now, for a small investment, we can help them turn that expertise to peaceful projects that help the world and draw a living wage doing it. Or we can do nothing and pray that each and every one of those thousands of scientists will somehow resist the temptation to market their expertise to those who wish to do us and the cause of freedom harm. Common sense says to me that we ought to give them something useful and good to do and let them make a decent living.

That's why, in my State of the Union Address, I proposed increasing funding for threat reduction by two-thirds over the next 5 years. I want to work with Congress to make these investments to make the world a safer place.

Another challenge is to create a durable and comprehensive peace in the region that every President since Richard Nixon has considered among the most dangerous in the world, the Middle East. Today, we have a real opportunity to do that. The new Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Barak, formerly the commander of all Israel's military forces, has

set forth an ambitious agenda to reach agreement within the next 15 months and to move the process beyond the setbacks of recent years.

Both Israelis and Palestinians now are determined to move forward. But the enemies of peace stand ready to strike to undercut this path. That is why last fall, when the two sides made a commitment to peace at the Wye River talks, we made a commitment to them, as well. As the United States has done ever since the Camp David accords in the late 1970's, we told the Israelis that we would help them minimize the risks of peace and lift the lives of the Palestinian people. We told the Jordanians that we would help promote their safety and their well-being.

Now, I know that's a long way away. But you know if there's a full-scale war in the Middle East, it will affect our interests and our values. The Middle East is home to all three of the world's great religions that hold we are created by one God. We have a chance to see it become a place of peace. If it becomes again a place of war, it will cost us far more than investing in a common, shared, peaceful future. The conflict has gone on for too long. We have a historic opportunity to end it. If the Israelis, the Palestinians, the Jordanians—ultimately, the Syrians and the Lebanese—if they all are willing to do their part, we must do ours, and we ought to begin by keeping our word to fund the Wye River peace process.

We also have an opportunity, believe it or not, to move beyond a series of cruel conflicts in Africa. In the last 3 weeks, in efforts led not by the United States, although we supported them, but by the African countries themselves, we have seen signs for hope in the resolution of devastating conflicts, especially in the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which has claimed more than 70,000 lives already. We have seen the most populous country in Africa, Nigeria, hold a democratic election and bring to an end 15 years of misrule. All this is very good news. It means that the largest untapped market for our products in the world, a continent of over 700 million people, that provides nearly as much oil to us as we get from the Middle East, will now have a chance to develop in

freedom and peace and shared prosperity with us and other freedom-loving people.

Now, the African countries don't want the United States to solve their problems or to deploy our military. All they've asked us to do, at a small cost, is to support their efforts to resolve conflicts on their own, to keep the peace, to build better lives for their people, and to develop competent militaries. These efforts don't make a lot of headlines. I'll bet most of you don't know much about them. That's good, because the point is to avoid headlines, headlines about famine and refugee crisis and genocide, and to replace them, instead, with stories of partnership and shared prosperity. These are the stories we can write now, again, if Congress will invest only a tiny portion of what we spend on defense on avoiding war in the first place.

Finally, there is the question of the United Nations. One of the great legacies of our victory in World War II is an institution where nations seek to resolve differences with words instead of weapons. Paying our dues to that organization is a legal and a moral responsibility. It ought to be reason enough to do so. If we fail to do so soon, the United States will actually lose its vote in the General Assembly.

But obligation is not the only reason for doing this, so is opportunity. The U.N. helps us to mobilize the support of other nations for goals Americans cherish, from keeping the peace to immunizing children, to caring for refugees, to combating the spread of deadly weapons. We've been working with growing success to make sure that the U.N. operates better, at lower cost.

But we have to do our part. Unless we want America to pay all the costs and take all the risks to solve the world's big problems, we have to work with others, and that means paying our fair share of dues, like every other country does, to the United Nations.

The bottom line is this: Today we have a unique opportunity and a real responsibility to advance the values in the world won in the 20th century over the last 100 years by America's veterans. But if we have only one arrow in our quiver, our military, we sacrifice the work of peace and increase the risk of war. We have to do our part to keep the world on a stable path toward democracy,